

REMARKS

By the present amendment, claims 12 to 16 are pending in the application.

Claim 12 is the only independent claim.

INTERVIEW

The applicants and the applicants' attorney again thank the Examiner for the courtesy of the personal interview on August 10, 2006. A Statement of Substance of Interview was mailed by Certificate of Mailing dated August 29, 2006. The content of the Statement of Substance of Interview mailed by Certificate of Mailing dated August 29, 2006 is incorporated herein by reference.

SUPPORT FOR NEW CLAIMS

Claim 12

New independent claim 12 is essentially the same as the independent claim appearing at page 3 of the Interview Summary prepared by the Examiner on August 10, 2006. New independent claim 12 incorporates claim limitations from prior claims 1, 7 and 8.

Claim 13

New dependent claim 13 corresponds to prior dependent claim 3.

Claim 14 and 15

New dependent method claims 14 and 15 correspond to prior dependent method claims 4 and 5.

Claim 16

New dependent claim 16 corresponds to prior dependent claims 9 and 11.

Allowable Subject Matter

The applicants are pleased to note that the Office Action advises at page 3 that claims 7 to 11 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim and any interviewing claim.

§103

Claims 1 to 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,857,808 to Sugimoto et al. (PCT Publication date 3/8/01) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,467,321 to Prokopenko.

Since claims 1 to 5 have been canceled by the present amendment, this rejection is now moot.

Patentability

New independent claim 12 contains claims limitations from prior claims 1, 7 and 8. It is therefore submitted that new independent claim 12, and claims 13 to 16 dependent thereon, are patentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,857,808 to Sugimoto et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,467,321 to Prokopenko.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that in view of the present amendment and foregoing remarks, the application is now in condition for allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that the application, as amended, be allowed and passed for issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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